

Opening Statement
Chairman Michael C. Burgess, M.D.
Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health
Subcommittee Markup: Opioid Bills and ADUFA/AGDUFA
April 25, 2018

(As prepared for delivery)

Today marks a significant step forward in our Subcommittee's progress in addressing the opioid epidemic facing our nation. As we mark up these 63 bills, we will be making substantial headway in our fight against the crisis that is tragically taking 115 American lives per day.

Many of these bills are a product of bipartisan effort and compromise. Taken together, the bills before us today will improve access to care for individuals suffering from substance use disorder, provide our health care system with tools and resources it needs to care for patients, and help prevent future misuse of opioids.

Throughout this process, we have engaged members, providers, plans, patient advocates, and others – including numerous officials at federal agencies – and will continue to do so. Some of these bills remain in discussion draft form intentionally, signaling our commitment to working with members and stakeholders to get technical details right so our agencies can implement these promising solutions in a timely manner. Thanks to the work of members of this subcommittee, these bills are on track make a positive impact when they are signed into law, by providing help where it is most needed and helping ensure taxpayer dollars are spent in a responsible manner.

The opioid crisis is devastating our country, undermining our social structures, and eroding our economic productivity. This Subcommittee and the full Energy and Commerce Committee are committed to turning the tide in our fight against this crisis. This is not an abstract fight

against an unknown enemy; this is personal – because it is a battle for the heart and soul of too many of our friends, neighbors and communities.

We have reached this point today because we have been in the fight for many months. Last October, we held a Member Day where members on and off the committee offered their ideas and solutions to combat the opioid crisis. In February in this subcommittee we reviewed more than half a dozen bills aimed at helping communities balance enforcement and patient safety. In March, we reviewed more than two dozen bills focusing on improving public health and prevention efforts. Earlier this month we reviewed bills focused on leveraging Medicaid and Medicare authorities to help patients served by those programs. Just last week, we also had the privilege to listen to parents and a survivor who have been so tragically impacted by the opioid epidemic.

While we still have finishing touches to put on these bills as we receive feedback from stakeholders and technical assistance from the administration and the Congressional Budget Office, I am pleased this Subcommittee will report a promising collection of bills to the full Committee.

Finally, we will also markup H.R. 5554, a bill to reauthorize the user fee programs for animal drugs and generic animal drugs. Timely consideration and completion of reauthorizing these important programs is important to the millions of American families and businesses that rely on vital functions of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Center for Veterinary Medicine.

I would like to thank the members of our subcommittee, and other members who authored bills that are up for consideration today. We appreciate your hard work and willingness to put forth creative ideas in combatting this public health crisis.

I look forward to advancing many of these bills to the full committee.